

The Court has come to this conclusion mindful of the standards set forth in *Ashcraft v. Conoco, Inc.*, 218 F.3d 282, 288 (4th Cir. 2000), which mandates that before entering an order sealing documents, a district court must: “(1) give public notice of the request to seal and allow interested parties a reasonable opportunity to object, (2) consider less drastic alternatives to sealing the documents, and (3) provide specific reasons and factual findings supporting its decision to seal the documents and for rejecting the alternatives.”

Docketing the motion to seal “reasonably in advance of deciding the issue” is sufficient to provide the public notice required by *Ashcraft*. See *In re Knight Publ’g Co.*, 743 F.2d 231, 235 (4th Cir. 1984) (cited by *Ashcraft*, 218 F.3d at 288). Plaintiff’s motion was docketed on May 15, 2020, and the docket has been made available to the public. Additionally, the Court finds that there are no less drastic alternatives to sealing the aforementioned documents, which contain competitively sensitive information. Disclosure of this information unavoidably would lead to Plaintiff losing the competitive advantage that exists by virtue of the information’s secrecy.

For these reasons, and for good cause shown, Plaintiff’s Motion to File Exhibits under Seal is GRANTED. It is ORDERED that Plaintiff may file Exhibits 34 and 35 to its Memorandum of Law in Support of Motion for Summary Judgment under seal. The documents will remain permanently sealed unless and until the Court orders otherwise.

SO ORDERED, this ____ day of May 2020.

The Honorable Robert E. Payne
Senior United States District Judge